

IN THE CLAIMS:

The text of all pending claims, (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with underlining and deleted text with ~~striketrough~~. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

1. (canceled)
2. (canceled)
3. (canceled)
4. (canceled)
5. (canceled)
6. (canceled)
7. (canceled)
8. (canceled)
9. (canceled)
10. (currently amended) A digital document discussion method, comprising:
a ~~discussion-document~~ storage step of storing a digitized ~~discussion-document~~ including a plurality of templates corresponding to documents in a ~~discussion-document~~ database;
an attribute information storage step of storing attribute information on a user including a discussion requester and a discussion participant in as an attribute information database;
a template providing step of providing a template corresponding to a document to be discussed out of the templates stored in the document database to a first client at the discussion requester ~~as the user by a frame-based on~~ with a work process relating to the document and the

~~attribute information corresponding to the discussion document used as keys;~~

a discussion document creation step of creating the discussion document based on the template at the first client;

a material information accumulation step of accumulating a plurality of items of material information;

a discussion request step of ~~requesting-transmitting a discussion request with the discussion document from the first client to a second client at a discussion participant as the user-requesting the discussion participant~~ to discuss the discussion document created in the discussion document creation step-transmitted and displayed at the second client;

a search step of searching material information associated with the discussion document ~~requested in the discussion request step~~ from the plurality of items of material information; and

a material information providing step of providing the material information searched in the search step to the discussion participant when discussing the discussion document.

11. (currently amended) A digital document discussion method comprising:

a ~~discussion-document storage step of storing a digitized discussion-document including a plurality of templates corresponding to documents in a discussion-document database;~~

an attribute information storage step of storing attribute information on a user including a discussion requester and a discussion participant in ~~as-an attribute information database;~~

a template providing step of providing a template corresponding to a document to be discussed out of the templates stored in the document database to a first client at the discussion requester as the user by a frame-based on with a work process relating to the document and the ~~attribute information-corresponding to the discussion document used as keys;~~

a discussion document creation step of creating ~~the~~ a discussion document based on the template;

a discussion request step of ~~requesting-transmitting a discussion request with the discussion document from the client to a second client at a discussion participant as the user requesting the discussion participant~~ to discuss the discussion document created in the discussion document creation step-transmitted and displayed at the second client;

a search step of searching material information designated by the discussion participant from a plurality of items of material information associated with the discussion document requested in the discussion request step;

a material information providing step of providing the material information searched in the search step to the discussion participant when discussing the discussion document; and

a discussion step of allowing the discussion participant to discuss the discussion document ~~requested in the discussion request step in accordance with the work process~~displayed at the second client.

12. (canceled)

13. (currently amended) A digital document discussion program for allowing a computer to function as:

a ~~discussion-document~~ storage unit which stores a digitized ~~discussion-document~~ including a plurality of templates corresponding to documents in a ~~discussion-document~~ database;

an attribute information storage unit which stores attribute information on a user including a discussion requested and a discussion participant in as an attribute information database;

a template providing unit which provides a template to a corresponding to a document to be discussed out of the templates stored in the document database to a first client at the discussion requester ~~as the user by a frame-based on~~ with a work process relating to the document and the attribute information ~~corresponding to the discussion document used as keys;~~

a discussion document creation unit which creates the discussion document based on the template at the first client;

a material information accumulation unit which accumulates a plurality of items of material information;

a discussion request unit which ~~requests-transmits a discussion request with the discussion document from the first client to a second client at a discussion participant as the user-requesting the discussion participant~~ to discuss the discussion document created in the discussion document creation step transmitted and displayed at the second client;

a search unit which searches material information associated with the discussion document ~~requested in the discussion request unit~~ from the plurality of items of material information; and

a material information providing unit which provides the material information searched in the search unit to the discussion participant when discussing the discussion document.

14. (currently amended) A digital document discussion program for allowing a computer to function as:

a ~~discussion-document~~ storage unit which stores a digitized ~~discussion-document~~

including a plurality of templates corresponding to documents in a discussion-document database;

an attribute information storage unit which stores attribute information on a user as including a discussion requester and a discussion participant in an attribute information database;

a template providing unit which provides a template corresponding to a document to be discussed out of the templates stored in the document database to a first client at the discussion requester as the user by a frame-based on with a work process relating to the document and the attribute information-corresponding to the discussion document used as keys;

a discussion document creation unit which creates the discussion document based on the template at the first client;

a discussion request unit which requests-transmits a discussion request with the discussion document from the first client to a second client a discussion participant as the user requesting the discussion participant to discuss the discussion document transmitted and displayed at the second clientcreated in the discussion document creation unit;

a search unit which searches material information designated by the discussion participant from a plurality of items of material information associated with the discussion document requested in the discussion request stepfrom the plurality of items of material information; and

a material information providing unit which provides the material information searched in the search step to the discussion participant when discussing the discussion document; and

a discussion unit which allows the discussion participant to discuss the discussion document requested in the discussion request unit in accordance with the work processdisplayed at the second client.

15. (new) A digital document discussion method comprising:
- creating a discussion document using a template obtained responsive to attributes of a user and a work process;
 - associating material information with the discussion document;
 - transmitting the discussion document to a discussion participant;
 - allowing the discussion participant to search the material information; and
 - allowing the discussion participant to provide comments about the discussion document.